Reflections

Of Being

REFLECTIONS

Of Being In The Wild

By Vandana "Imaan"

There are some who can live without wild things and some who cannot.

– Aldo Leopold

Of what significance the light of day, if it is not the reflection of an inward dawn?—to what purpose is the veil of night withdrawn, if the morning reveals nothing to the soul?

– Henry David Thoreau

TO EARTH

Aldo Leopold and Henry David Thoreau

by Vandana "Imaan". *Cover photographs by author.*

The Poet writes the history of her own Being.

I write from observation — not indulgence, not flair.
My life is light: living in and watching the world. Yet the writing is heavy.
Because someone has to see and hold what hasn't been spoken,
what was buried unspoken,
transfigured,
butchered,
or, worst of all, reified.
I chose to be the one who doesn't look away.
It not just a telling.
It also witnessing.
And it asks nothing —
but that someone else may pause,
listen,
see,
and maybe — just maybe — carry it forward.

“I had as yet no notion that life every now and then becomes literature—not for long, of course, but long enough to be what we best remember, and often enough so that what we eventually come to mean by life are those moments when life, instead of going sideways, backwards, forward, or nowhere at all, lines out straight, tense and inevitable, with a complication, climax, and, given some luck, a purgation, as if life had been made and not happened.

A River Runs Through It

Norman Maclean

Reflections Of Being

In the Wild

Under the rocks are the words,
and some of the words are theirs. I am haunted by waters.

Reflections Of Being

In the Wild

They speak of thunder, of fire, of a resting place for the lost.
Eyes speak of a premonition of love ...

A written word is the choicest of relics. It is something at once more intimate with us and more universal than any other work of art. It is the work of art nearest to life itself.

– Henry David Thoreau

Alchemist

Beauty
Faith
Love
Happiness
Integrity
The Wild

It was a sudden journey
without any guaranteed station.
Not knowing why I was going,
what I was seeking,
if there were to be an end to it,
or was it to finally cure me,
of the ugly malaise that had long been
growing its tentacles inside my already
shriveled soul,
gouging away with that disgusting relish
I had started to despise
yet feel familiar with ...
safe,
unquestioning,
itself dead, rotting, yet insistent on
keeping me alive.

But I knew,
with that same uncomfortable certainty
one has before a fatal diagnosis,
I was being called.
Not by the closeted, pristine sanctity of
that time-stolen place.
Not by the murmurs of the night wind,
quietly echoing through the unfulfilled
expanse of the holy firmament.
Not by the feeble prayers that arose from
them quivering lips,
only to lose their essence as they
touched the air outside.
I was being called to be born again.

From the earth that was slipping away
beneath my feet.

Emptiness.
Of the mind.
Deep into the abyss that was looking up
at me, from below.
That outstretched, barren, blessed land
had achieved a most peculiar convexity.
Rising up.
Falling down.
Was I being accepted:
a hesitant, lost, disillusioned,
unbelieving pilgrim;
Or was this abandonment, a convenient
disposal,
a fitting end for the chastised ...

Emptiness.
It had moved out of my soul and was
now filling up my eyes.

Thoughts were vacant.
I was arrested.
The canvas was starting to grow darker,
more prominent,
digging deep into the skin;
the fluorescence chiseling its way
to vivid greens,
reds, blues, beiges ...
mirrors of the cosmic kaleidoscope
melting into one another, distilling
out.

"Give me your hand."

Blackness.
Extended.
Saviour?

The land stopped.
That monstrous wave from the womb of the earth
...
growing,
howling like a banshee.
It was gone.
Contracted into singularity,
Self-consumed.

The earth was again beneath my feet.
And the emptiness ...
It was on its way to find a home.

Preface

These are not poems. These are quiet reckonings — small silences that speak of what it means to be, un-be, and become.

Written in the wild of the inner world, where the intellect dissolves and only presence remains, **Reflections** traces a personal metamorphosis: not toward transcendence, but toward truth.

What lies beneath the rocks, behind the metaphors, within the ache? This book does not answer. But it listens.

To all seekers, to all feelers — this is my mirror.

All I remember are the hands.
Attached to sinewy arms,
with an almost-embossed network of
veins.
Nucleated.
A spider's web.
Spreading like roots into the clay.
Smeared with it.
Immersed.
Sustaining it with the blood within.
A most intimate osmosis.
They had stopped for a while that day.
Like gravity catching the apple.
One infinite moment.
He had given birth.
Reversing the cycle.

———————

In that interstice,
as if filled with vacuum,
when the planets froze in their orbits
and the delusion of Time stretched out
into a thin line
hardly perceptible to the naked eye,
the violin started to cry,
first faintly in the background.
And then as if it owned the air whole.
In celebration ... euphoric?
Or haunted by the ghost of an unhealthy
attachment to a demised past ...
I couldn't tell.

———————

All I can tell is:
She had ultimately come to life.
Not on borrowed, soon-to-expire breaths.
Certainly not as the last act in a bad
play,
with the actors rushing to reach its
morbid finale —
because a conclusion was urgent,
to escape the tragedy of what had passed.

No.
It was the beginning.
Of spring.
The expectant promise of thunder as
lightning strikes ...
A Prelude.
She was His.

Beauty is where it is perceived.

– Henry David Thoreau

ALCHEMIST

The sun burns your eyes.
They said.
Embers, flowing through space,
twisting, turning, metamorphosing into shards of glass,
before they bite into the cornea like a ravenous dog,
lusting for the deep primitive stench of
drop-by-drop oozing blood --
not red, not wine, but a putrid yellow.
Yes, that liquid force as it courses my veins,
to finally sublimate like a hypergiant balloon, into the ether.
Hydrogen.
Look, how it thaws me like a frozen carcass,
as it contacts the warmth of embrace,
of fire,
of the inhuman heat.
Of touch.
Of breath.
Of soul.

Of fusion.
Burning, burning flowers.
The revolving earth. The gaping sky.
Slow motion.
Disoriented, and finding centre.
'Shatter'.
No longer a word, but what I feel.
Upon one gentle kiss, fondling,
to escape, to be forgotten, only to be remembered again.
Wild.
The sun is forbidden. Like love.
But the moon, ah, the moon.
Palpable and glistening with the serene light of a thousand cold ivory nights.
It falls on the skeleton of my life-bleached face.
A bone monument of ruins.
To invigorate?
Resuscitate?

I don't know.
Yet I levitate. Airy, weightless, self-less.
Up and high. Down and within.
The ever-new unfolding of a salacious moment
and its extraordinary memory.
In flesh. The haunting vacuity of crossing
the same bridge a million times and anticipating ...
Barking jowls of misery, unearthed and surrendered to.
Tamed.
Come. Eat me.
The moon. Owns. Eventually. Truly. Eternally.
It's a quiet thing. This stranger named LOVE.
A summoning.
An unrelenting, impossibly cruel yet immeasurably kind,
insatiable, inexorable summoning.
A question?
The answer?
Maybe.

Elation. Anguish.
The whole inch and the extra mile.
Cinematic. Effortless.
Fragile. Resilient.
Known. Unknowable.
Enduring. Ephemeral.
A microcosm of extremes, contrasts.
Like a heavy smoke lightly drifting away.
Like a riddle that has doubled up upon itself,
the victim,
the accomplice,
the perpetrator,
merged into one -- the perfect, unsolvable plot.
Like a nascent spring,
enveloped between the covers
of an always-already cacophony,
eager to break free,
to submerge within its orgasmic victory.

The liminality between.
The Carnal. The Profound.
Those eyes, half-mast.
Exploring.
Confined.
Confining.
Pushing me against the tide.
To fall, to rise. Like a waving manifesto.
To flow, passing through and becoming whole among the hidden crevices.
And the heart?
Cut open. Examined. Deliberate.
Beyond banalities and falsities.
Pretense and imitation.
Devoured.
Drunk.
Luteal.
Nebulous -- Gold.

Blurring the lines, the boundaries,
the goddamn world ....
Transmutating.
Everything, nothing.
And Genesis – the order of Things.
Alchemist, that stranger.

Aftertaste.
The sun burns the eyes ...
What do they know.

BEAUTY

Drowning in the voices of reason,
of human subjectivities, calibrations and platitudes,
what lies within, as you chip away the conforming exterior,
the towering grandiosity, the ideal, the idea of beauty?

Is a child's first step, it?
Or the content exhaustion of the day . . .
the crystalline, fragile manifestation of the dream,
or even the subtle, honest, almost audible sound of an unuttered sigh?

Or is it not what escapes us all with the passage of time:
the hoarded pain of heartbreak, of loss,
of an eternal captivity sold in the promise of freedom,
of choice?
The act of forgetting, forgiving, living;
a widened panorama pieced together like patchwork,
through reams of the fabric of experiences,

accidents, encounters, yearnings,
and humble, innocent, unintended mistakes . . .

Ballooned inside out, assuming gigantic proportions,
I begin to encapsulate this feeling that breaks out
to declare the end of night.
Carried through by the propensity that is clockwork,
the spent day,
like a landscape emerging out of the magmatic womb,
is roused from beneath the palimpsest
of a withered rose . . .
drop by drop, suckling from the breast of Mother Earth,
the mountains, the rivers, the lands and forests,
the givers and takers, the lovers and haters —
all soar up the fresco, overlying the curves of the sky.

Cupping them en masse in both hands,
as the splash of colours invigorates the mantle of my blank soul,

I feel the pulsations of Being throb close to my heart:
what Keats called ‘a Joy forever’.

Born a human with desires to name, to segregate, to own,
I wish,
with that well-familiar, sickly, incongruous fervour,
that certain unconquerable dis-ease,
to imprison it within the limits of my boundaries,
my known unknowns, my physicality, my impermanent
permanence, but maybe this would not be wise —
to let it be, perceivable as it is with these mortal eyes.

A whole world gathers around for it to realise,
to take form, to materialise —
that quivering music flowing outwards, onwards
from far-away lands;
the delicate yet consuming touch on the skin,
storing away an infinite moment of memory,

clandestine, before the parting;
breaths that nourish, that exhale a body vast
out to the extremities of the golden horizon;
fragrant twigs of juniper encircling,
entwining, in a climaxed passion,
from up the feet below to the stars beyond;
a moist, lingering taste of ripe berries,
savoured, distilled, preserved — to be revoked on command;
visions of heaven and earth, groping at one another,
to be defined, to be accepted,
to wane into the fog, into the glory of the psychedelic,
to be subsumed . . . into Eternity.

The most exquisite, crumbly, translucent amalgamation
of truths and lies conjures up in the mind.
Emboldened yet exoticized.
Flickering like a candle in the wind,
it gains presence, an identity, a sense of being,

as if saturated with the faintest shade of green.
A fitting solemnity, to lay to rest the caricatures that
surround me.

Aflutter, somewhat overwhelmed, yet curiously expectant,
I fan out my fingers, with the entitlement that comes with
the triptych of Me, My-Self, Mine,
to grasp whatever contours I could,
as I cast aside the veil of subliminal existences.
The kaleidoscopic slivers of mirrors fall apart,
and in that very instant of re-discovery,
eschewing the yoke of previous traditions,
of creators and believers —
an action taxonomy of sort to reach a meaning,
a consensus, a delineating characteristic —
the theatre jumps up, folding and closing onto itself.

I become it.

My actual life is a fact, in view of which I have no occasion to congratulate myself; but for my faith and aspiration I have respect. It is from these that I speak.

– Henry David Thoreau

FAITH

Walking.

Sometimes this simplest of act acquires
a tremendous import.
From the time we learn to stand on our feet,
this one activity becomes emblematic,
of all our future paths, our future journeys.
Journeys of faith.

Beyond men and their gods,
this one human realization defines
who we are, as much individually as collectively,
a people.
Attached to tenterhooks or unmovable like the mountain,
in moments of frailty,
at the peak of one's strength,
in doubts and disappointments,
or within the inner world of peace,

the torch stays aflame.

Today,
sitting by an open fire
in the wilderness of my heart,
with no sound to distract, or presence to interfere,
I wonder about its origins,
its constitution;
how it stands the test of time?
Is the seed always there,
or does an idea, a person, a thought plant it?
That if it were to reach corruption,
or impotence,
was it even true to begin with?
Or is it allowed as many transformations,
as many metamorphoses,
as the body undergoes?
Is there a youth, is there senescence?

Or all there is to it is an unchanging immortality?
No sickness, no ageing;
neither betrayal nor abandonment;
no death . . .

May be it has a learning curve,
or even the elusive nirvana,
the ultimate goal of Enlightenment;
or maybe it is just a fool's tale,
an ivory tower cut off from the barbs and dirt
of existence?
Where is the defining line that cuts it separate
from arrogance,
from blindness,
from hatred and friction?
Alas, whom should I ask,
when we sit staunchly closed, feeling morally superior
with our own versions stuck tight to the chest . . .

Closed and isolated, with puffed-out chests,
in self-made echo chambers
from where questions never come back.

And still pondering,
as I ebb and flow within these
streams of consciousness,
I endeavor the difficult task of arriving at a semblance of
anatomical understanding,
of weighing, against my better judgement,
its inherent goodness,
its standing among advocates and adversaries,
its merit among the other thousand ‘human’ concepts,
its raison d'être –
when all histories,
from the barbaric to the medieval to the post-modernist,
offer are wars among men,
paradoxically, over its very versions,

from god to race, to class, to country,
to the very foundation of its own frame . . .

Still, no amount of deliberation brings me closer
to my mental Elysium than the simple fact that it is what it is,
an act of will, of self-preservation.
Unlike those before me, I choose to not fight the war for its
'meaning'.
Maybe that is its essence:
to create, not destroy, to sustain, not exploit . . .
a secret, holy, personal oasis of values to quench one's thirst –
to feel, to know, to love, to submerge in, to simply be.
The innate, the primitive, the raw in us. Untouched. Pure.
Like an inevitable, invisible, yet profoundly tangible crossroads
we all come to, sooner or later,
jutting into a million directions, a billion suns –
Only to walk, ever more, towards one's guiding light,
with faith, to faith.

Love never stands still, nor does its object. It is the revolving sun and the swelling bud. If I know what I love, it is because I remember it.

– Henry David Thoreau

LOVE

As an animal of habit and solitude,
the dilemma of capturing love in words
is a formidable challenge
for even the greatest of poets –
it prerequires a transition to the Other,
away from the routine of scribbling snippets and anecdotes onto blank sheets of paper.
There is a sea of boundaries to break,
to wade through,
to trespass, to literally run afoul with,
before one begins to touch the periphery of,
to fathom the incredible immensity, the great tenacity, the reverberating intensity of what love is . . .

And to make matters worse,
this transgression,
this unsurpassable transcendence happens not on the material plane,

or the ideological,
but on one which the poet erroneously believes to have
definitive mastery, control,
a strange case of artificial privilege, some deeper, gratuitous,
and yet to which only he is privy, insight, even misconstrued
affinity —
the realm of the spiritual.
Still, we all try.
For there is a unique satisfaction in aspiring.
Overcoming. Giving up. And Becoming.

While all human transactions and attainments aim at
stroking the Ego, oftentimes feeding the perilous flame
close to the point of becoming monstrous, thus refining the art
of deception, self and all, till it reaches its nadir;
and all phenomena of the mind and body ultimately
find themselves pried open,
love slips through the cracks of our dysfunctional psyche,

unscathed, to meet the Other in a union of equals:
where the beloved and it are mirror images,
both completing one another, yet whole.

So is love a vapour of the ether that constitutes them both,
a distinct yet viscerally shared fragrance that the two emanate?
Or is it a lost note from their Great Rhapsody later found,
a verse broken off by the wind of vagaries
only to return home, more fulfilled, to the poesy that is life . . .

Whatever be the choice of metaphors,
there's always some space left.
A sensuous, enigmatic interlude,
filled with a language, a knowledge, a world of the indescribable
that only they have access to.
A wild country where Time tinges not just seasons but love itself,
yet everything stays the same:
in memories, in moments,

in that undercurrent of acknowledgement to life — I do.

Be it the visage of tired dandelions
that regains its silvery aura as an evening
withdraws under the gentle, soothing moonlight;
be it the much-coveted sanctity of
the most ennobling thoughts ever rendered
in the course of humanity;
be it the faint reflection of the loved
cast upon a scarlet sky as the day dawns;
be it the steadfastness of the river
as it fulfils with her every drop the promise
to give;
be it the safe refuge of the Mother
where childhood learns what it means to be free;
be it the surrender, the abnegation of Self that the worshipper seeks;
or be it the flight of ascendancy that

a truly lived experience takes —
a phantasmagorical yet equally real panoply of existences
within existences,
love creates and paints in its most delicate of shades,
a lush, warm canopy of Spring incarnate.

Much like an unadulterated child's play that has
no definition of loss or gain, of mine and yours,
in the quest itself,
the seeker actualises the Grand Communion —
relinquishing what he was,
all that he possessed,
to where he was going, and all that he had lived,
like patched decades of an old, tattered skin,
to merge into a century of greatness unseen.
A master builder, love raises from the clay
the transience of the human edifice and sculpts it
into a divinity of Being.

Man is the artificer of his own happiness.

– Henry David Thoreau

HAPPINESS

Oftentimes, words become limitations.
Their pragmatic borders can't absorb,
can't assimilate the emotion of a mind free from the fear
and burdens of our worldly activities.
That there can ever be such a simple form and shape to it,
that there can ever be this quiet recognition,
that there can ever be some unity,
a definite integrity —
I am yet to discover such a language . . .

But the sudden, fierce, thunderous turn of the wind
on a quiet night knows.
The rambling river on its way to the ocean knows.
What a sojourner feels,
as he looks ahead from the vantage point —
the seducing vista of flower beds,
the hide-and-seek play of light rays,
the grand canvas of lofty peaks and cavernous valleys . . .

Or a pilgrim, when the miles behind him finally come to a close
and the eyes are bestowed with the clean sight of Sublime . . .

Or a creator, as the hands build up with every brick
the universe of his imagination –
the hours, the sweat, the life-blood of subterranean ambition . . .

How at the end of the day's busy hours,
cocooned in the otherworldly warmth of a crackling fire
and hot chocolate,
the slow infusion of sage, rosemary and coffee
into the surrounding air
shrinks the barista's entire world to an atom of cosiness,
blown out, melted and smeared upon the four walls of the café:
all cares disappear as embers keep up their dance –
to glow and fade, glow and fade.

Is it humanly possible to define this, precise?

What about the whistling song of the rain that awakens
the immanent primeval sentiment buried deep in us all,
or the excited heart that quivers and resonates
like a tuning fork, mirroring the antics of the wild storm?
The way a child laughs, with abandon,
not subdued, not mechanised, not hindered . . .
A fine touch of chrysanthemums on the droopy lids of a sleepy
Sunday morning . . .

It is no wonder I find myself wordless . . .

How do you explain the patterns clouds make on their way
across the kingdom of heaven,
flirting with the firmament, teasing and testing to get away;
or the palette of colours that some unseen, unknowable
master painter fashions of his own choosing,
from among a million others,
to adorn the sky ahead of its nuptial flight?

How do you craft such lyric or verse that can condense
the tender loveliness and splendour of the first leaves
as they begin to dip into a green flourish,
or the delicate yellow blush of the sunflower by the window sill,
which, aloof of its jealous neighbours,
deepens into the most intense shade of orange love …

What a mother feels when she feeds her child out of the womb,
for the first time, with the suppleness of her milk:
the hungry, fumbling touch of the lips, the pleasure in that pull,
the sucking sound, the gratification …
Or the tears that well up when the vaguest remembrance
resuscitates a love lost to searing confines of Time …

Soft, slippery, fine like silk,
such flashes of the Now, of the Gone, of the Owned …
can they 'be' what *happiness* 'is' —
flitting before us, time and again,

sometimes to give, sometimes to take, sometimes to remind . . .
Then what use it is to delimit when its essence is to
expand, engulf, enliven, enrich . . .

A tree branch hangs in the open window,
suspended in the liminality between space and time.
The newly formed leaves glisten with promise,
of sun and summer and an inexhaustible earth —
to explode and consume, to spread across . . . to rise like spires.

***

Of all the tendencies the human heart is guilty of,
foolish, brave, fragile, resilient,
a hoarder, a giver, or a dreamer strong,
let there be one undefined that accepts and sublimates them all.

One intact, unimprisoned, to free them all.

By the quality of a man's writing, by the elevation of its tone, you may measure his self-respect.

– Henry David Thoreau

INTEGRITY

It never matters,
beyond that one final point.
A point reached and never again.

As millions fester and wade through that hell
between the perishable rubble of proprieties of pretense
and an equally decaying yet infinitely grisly everyday attempt
of piecing together splinters of the self,
one fights, with everything it takes.
To maintain the sanctity that defines life, that is life.
And then, one doesn't.

You can battle a live thing, however disorienting, however indecent.
But a blank negation . . .
How to conceptualize that?
A complicated, intricate, even what one can call, a beautiful act.
With twists and turns, trimmings and solemn words . . .

But an act, nevertheless.
Devoid of the actor, the audience . . . the theatre of the macabre.
Resplendent with corpses, without thoughts and desires.
Reflections of reflections,
shadows of shadows,
echoes of more echoes . . . Emptiness —
of judgment,
of a beginning, of an end,
of center, of purpose . . .
A senseless perpetuity trapped within two mirrors.
Facing each other yet eternally separate.

That is the collective malaise —
as much the needy seller as our esteemed buyer.
If only they could stop there . . .
For added effect and a gratuitous dose of the stately drama,
they bargain with the soul.
Bait and wait, then bait some more.

But can they buy “immortality”?
With the entity that was never formed,
that eked out a vacuous façade of existence by denying,
betraying, contradicting its own reality, in the name of change?
A succession of reversals and shams fading in and out . . .
Is that their goal — to confiscate what they never had,
that permanence, in tiny, coarse handfuls and call it their own?

A predator’s instinct.
Conscious.
Fragile.
Rapacious.
Corrosive. And extreme.
Spreading into the pure air like smoke, and eating the lungs out.
First slowly, then gluttonously.
With the primitiveness of the animal, precision of the butcher.
Morsels of fleshy, gutted sacs drenched in blood.
The Sinister has bought its legs of wood. And it stands, high.

An honorable deception,
the credo of auction and acquisition to swallow the world.
To feed upon suffering and humbly pronounce its worth.
Persecution is not always ghastly, or, to be precise,
even material . . .
A scale of horror follows, unprecedented.
Humanity, besieged.
Obscenities, unspeakable.

Behind every window and every eye that looks out, below,
on the tired waves of a time-beaten sea,
crawling past the skin in packed elevators,
perspiring, with every strenuous motion of the limbs,
in university halls,
amidst echelons of power,
transpiring through fractals of privilege,
on a random, obscure but busy street,
beneath the white sheets of the bedroom,

among dark hushed whispers,
atop collapsed empires of values,
under the creaking wooden floor of subterranean cellars,
they pull the noose and Man falls, sold.

***

“See, how you were wrong?”
“To give them the right to touch you . . .”
“To do this to you . . . in any way,
in their atomic, trifling, lurid, grotesquely juvenile way . . .”
“Where, oh, where does this monstrosity stop!”

“Where I can feel nothing, think nothing . . .”
“Only that it came from me.”
“That I gave it its form, its shade, its breaths.” “That I built it.”

“To be delivered whole, for them to desecrate?”

“To labour so, only to be teased out, disfigured, wrecked, with no culpability?”
“To offer to such, a temple for the highest, to be dragged . . . through mud, ash, filth – entrails of gore, disembowelled, fetid, cold . . . For what . . .”

An armistice of a few silences, stolen out of long,
empty years of interminable noise.

“To exist.”
“For one moment, for one day.”
“Erect.”
“A monument sculpted out of the earth of the human.”
“A celebration of the mind.”

“And yet, maimed, lest it survives and thrives . . .”

“Did that ever matter . . .”

Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest.

– Henry David Thoreau

THE WILD

Are words always enough?

In this odyssey of revolution to partake in,
how does a man even begin to paint a picture
of all that he feels within,
in the entangled cobwebs of his many scattered existences,
without, in the ineffable, deceptively apparent yet
obstinately obscure panoply of landscapes that cover the eyes.

The faint tinker of the water at the creek,
the rustling in the heart that originates from it,
a primitive feeling of belonging, unearthed,
like the plea of the howling wolf,
from frozen depths of a prehistoric memory —
like horses, unbridled, bolting through the air
in a naked stream of electricity;
like a fresh spawn of wriggling, squirming, jostling tadpoles;
like the gurgle that suffuses the river bed

with a most potent urgency as thirst finds fullness, satiety, life;
like pregnant, dilated clouds ready to give birth . . .

Becoming with every passing day more of a fellow-voyager
than an artist-observer,
a sense of wonder, a sense of kinship seems to be taking hold —
synchronized to the tune of a delicate harmony,
yet haunting and haunted by inadequate words.
In its expansive flight toward a still more freer continuity
my own inner journey has been transformed,
into an edifice,
a monument to commemorate all that came before,
all that has been owned —
symbolizing in its breadth and height the phalanx
of the victorious, the Great Unity of form and being.

As the chinar carries on its secret conversations
with the shy caterpillar coming up from below,

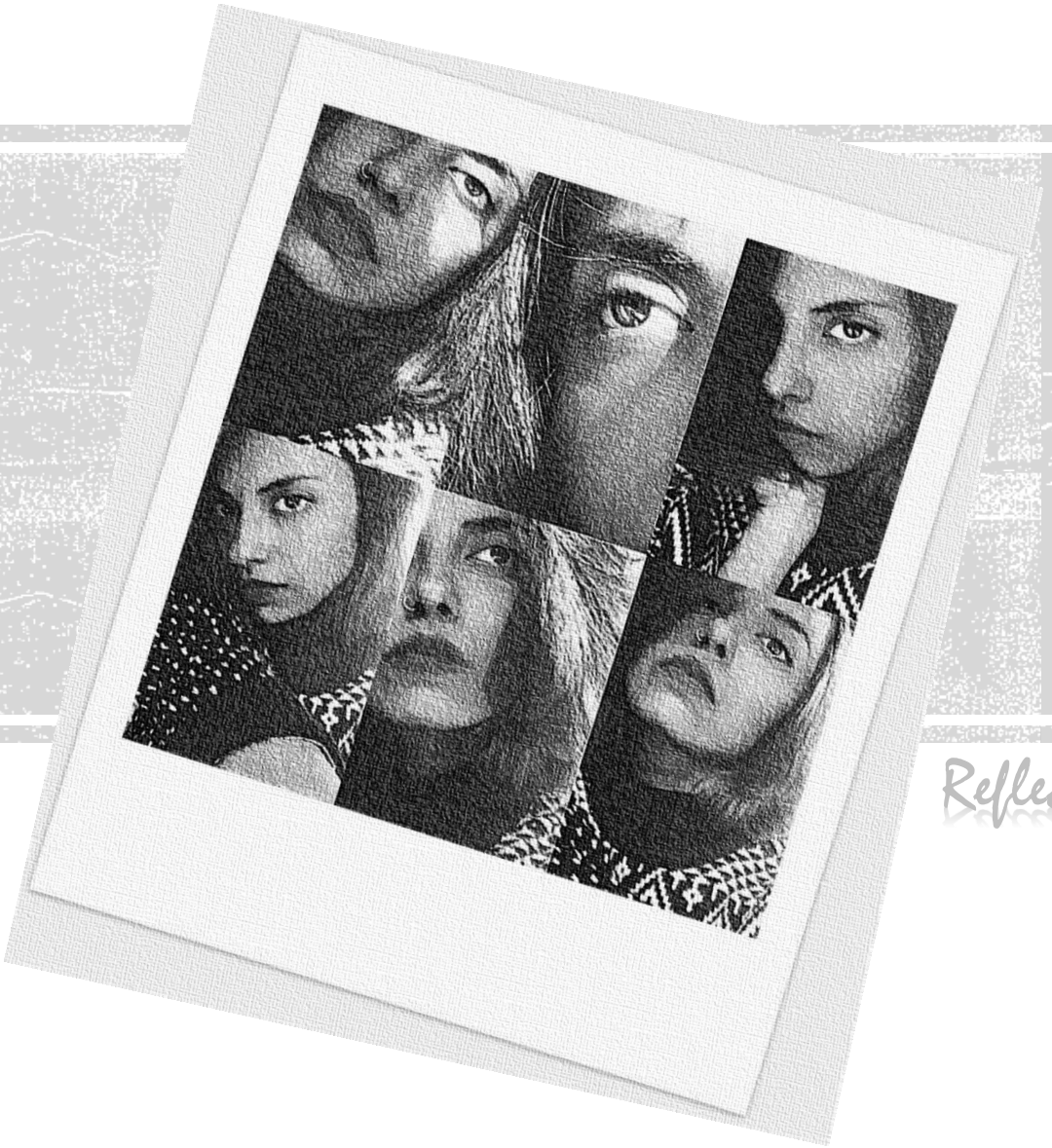
in the quietude of the mind-space, whatever is left uninitiated,
gains pace.
A vivid sharpness of colour and texture,
in their elemental simplicity, progressively dilutes into the
autumnal ether.
And all that can be seen, manifests.

The ancient mesquite,
scorched into gold by a long span of strife,
begins to burn with the wisdom of a thousand suns.
In that infinite spread of infinite moments,
the gnarled skeleton,
captured, tortured, petrified over an impossibly long century,
overcomes this bondage of living and breaks open,
with a snap.
The chalky blue smoke, having waited upon a lifetime of silence,
then rises up, to meet its creator,
releasing with its own simultaneous freedom,
a wilderness of cached fragrance.

Long listening to the aimless drifting and siren of the wind,
a mongrel assortment of sounds coalesce to harmonize.
The senses wake up.
In this hour of untasted exaltation, having found its purpose,
the odor of new leaves meets the odor of fresh clay
with indisputable confidence —
something was about to take shape.
The fervent, silvery flame of incandescence starts flickering,
and accumulated raindrops on the edges of time slide down
toward the earth, like pieces of magnet,
collected, ready . . .
a trembling, luminous, animated pool of unbounded possibilities.
Flaking away from the lines of the palm, tangles of golden,
translucent strands of an enraptured surrender outstretch,
to baptize the reverent terrain below.
Dimensions and directions morph as a setting of the Absolute —
molded in a silent, acquiesced acceptance,
a gauge of perfection scaled to glory . . . naked, sinless.

Is there a hidden cipher above, as majestic spirals of stars,
in a solemn circumambulation of sorts,
exhaust the limits of the sky?
A most mysterious triumph of invisible giants,
the sowers, the reapers —
the perfect flower of undefeatable Alchemy . . .
The mountain cries out in ecstasy the song of millennia,
of astonishing humility, of boundless fertility.
To the intently listening eagle,
perched high among the gods of the blue, it is a clarion call.
With an almost atavistic impulse,
it surges forth, spreading its wings to devour it all:
the earth, the soundscapes, visions of grandeur,
the handiwork of Eternity, of sovereign enthusiasms.

The vagrant wind knows, beyond and between
fragments of metaphors of an injured Time,
it will always be, the home of ‘the Wild’.



Reflections

Of Being

Life isn't about finding yourself; it's about creating yourself.
So live the life you imagined.

– Henry David Thoreau

The boundary between tame and wild exists only in the imperfections of the human mind.

– Aldo Leopold

In The Wild